

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

JAN. 14, 2010 Vol. 52 No. 1 50¢

World solidarity with Gaza as Int'l aid caravans confront blockade

By LeiLani Dowell

BULLETIN: A Jan. 6 post to the Viva Palestina Web site reports that more than 10 members of the Viva Palestina convoy were injured, four of them seriously, and seven members arrested by Egyptian police during a protest in Al-Arish, Egypt, late on Jan. 6. Organizers are negotiating with Egyptian authorities to release all participants and allow aid into Gaza.

...

Convoy leader Kevin Ovenden's Jan. 5 report describes the situation building up to the police attack.

Ovenden states, "We have now blocked the entrance to the port and we are now faced with riot police and water cannons and are determined to defend our vehicles and aid. ...

"We are now calling upon all friends of Palestine to mount protests in person where possible, but by any means available to Egyptian representatives, consulates and embassies and demand that the convoy be allowed a safe passage into

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Gaza tomorrow!"

In response, protests are being organized on Jan. 5 and 6 at the Egyptian Mission to the U.N. in New York, called by the Break the Siege on Gaza Coalition, and at other locations across the U.S.

For the latest updates on the Viva Palestina caravan, visit www.vivapalestina.org.

Jan. 4 — The steadfast, courageous resistance of the Palestinian people is receiving a strong shot of solidarity on the first anniversary of Israel's genocidal attack against Gaza in 2008. Two international caravans are attempting to bring much-needed aid to the area, which has been under a blockade for the past three years. Along the way they are bringing attention to the Palestinian struggle; challenging governments that aid the U.S.-funded, Israeli war machine; and receiving warm welcome and praise from the masses in neighboring countries.

After traveling throughout Europe to call attention to and raise donations for the Palestinian struggle, the Viva Palestina 3 caravan arrived in Aqaba, Jordan, on Dec. 24 with the intent of entering Gaza on Dec. 27. Consisting of some 450 activists from around the world, the caravan includes 250 trucks, ambulances and other vehicles loaded with medicine, school supplies, winter clothing and more.

International Action Center activist Ralph Loeffler, who is participating in the Viva Palestina 3 caravan, described in an email the reception in Turkey: "History was made Dec. 16 in Taksim Square, Istanbul. For the first time in 30 years the Turkish government gave permission for a political demonstration in historic Taksim Square — and it was given to support Viva Palestina's medical relief convoy to blockaded Gaza. A massive, enthusiastic crowd turned out in the pouring winter

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CONSUELA LEE



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Lee honored at Rosa Parks Museum,
Montgomery, Ala., 2005.

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WW PHOTO: BRENDA SANDBURG



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

On first anniversary of Gaza war, global protests support Palestinians under siege. New York City, left and above, San Francisco.

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Indigenous peoples and H1N1 deaths

A continuing legacy of inequality

By Dolores Cox

In December, the Centers for Disease Control issued a report regarding national mortality and infection rates from the H1N1 “swine” flu virus. One portion of the report was almost an afterthought and not very widely reported: Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Alaska have been four times more likely to die from the swine flu as has the population overall.

Similar findings have been the case in Canada, where some Manitoba First Nations communities were outraged in September when the Canadian government initially sent body bags and masks rather than much-needed medicine or medical personnel.

Are Native people somehow genetically more susceptible to H1N1 and hence more likely to get sick and die from it? Not at all. Racism is the cause of these increased death rates.

Native peoples are hit harder by any flu pandemic due to high poverty rates and higher rates of diabetes, asthma and other conditions that place them at higher risk.

A November 2009 report published by the Institute for Policy Studies, entitled “Challenges to Native American Advancement: The Recession and the Native American,” documents the condition of Native peoples in the U.S. in the 21st century. (www.ips-dc.org)

The report gives a brief history of the growth of the North American economy since the first European arrival in the 15th century, and its correlation with the concurrent collapse of Native nations’ economies. “The modern U.S. economy is based upon the stripping away of wealth — notably, land and natural resources — of Native Americans to create a foundation for a European-American economy. This legacy is seen in the contemporary economic disenfranchisement of Native Americans.”

The report highlights factors that have led to disparities between Native peoples and non-Natives, such as the appropriation of Indigenous peoples’ lands for the gain of white settlers; the mismanagement by the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the resources found on Native lands; and the underinvestment by the federal government in Native nations’ education,

health care and economic development.

Key findings are that the poverty rate as of 2007 for Native peoples is more than twice the national average, and almost three times higher than the rate among whites.

With regard to health care, only one-third of Indigenous people have health insurance. Native people have the highest rate per person of disability among all racial and ethnic groups, and are twice as likely as whites to die from diabetes, 60 percent more likely to have a stroke, and 20 percent more likely to have heart disease.

Native peoples’ unemployment rate is double that of the U.S. population as a whole. In this recession, industries with a relatively high number of Indigenous workers have experienced disproportionately high job losses. Additionally, over the past 30 years government spending on programs for Native peoples both on- and off-reservation has decreased dramatically.

The report notes that not only is “this country’s past and present still stained by the legacy of enslavement of African people [but] the original sin was the treatment of America’s Indigenous people. As the nation works to reverse today’s economic decline, it must finally work to repair the stains of the past.” □

Women outraged over serial murders ‘Investigate Cleveland for dereliction of duty’

By Workers World Cleveland bureau

On Dec. 22, Imperial Eleven Concerned Citizens of Cleveland held a press conference to announce the posting of a letter to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder requesting an investigation. The letter contends that at least six of 11 murdered Black women whose bodies were found on Imperial Avenue “would be alive if not for a dereliction of duty of officials in Cleveland City Government.”

Targeted officials and departments include the police department, prosecutors, law director, safety director, city council, mayor’s office, health department and water department. The letter cites the “stench on their street” that had been the source of numerous complaints. In addition, women who managed to flee for their lives found their reports were not taken seriously.

Donnie Pastard, author of the letter, says that she was motivated to take this step because “city officials appeared to be clueless as to how to handle concerns of the victims, which should have been obvious.” Many local activists signed the letter in support.

Sharon Danann, an organizer with the Imperial Women, a group supporting Pastard’s letter, said, “Imperial Avenue laid bare the value system of racism, sexism and contempt for the poor. We are joining together to turn this system around. Women around the world are standing up to stop rape and murder, the war of terror on women.”

Individuals and organizations from anywhere in the U.S. and all other countries are encouraged to contact the attorney general with expressions of support for an investigation into the malfeasance and neglect that contributed to the rapes and murders of the 11 women found so far in Cleveland.

Write to Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001; phone: 202-514-5001. Send e-mail to AskDOJ@usdoj.gov. Note: The Attorney General’s website asks you to include a mailing address in your e-mail and warns that the e-mail will be deleted if it has attachments. □

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Feds' new documents threaten Chilean anti-fascist

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

One week before the next hearing in the case of Victor Toro, the Department of Homeland Security has submitted ominous new documents focusing on Toro's role as a political leader in Chile in the 1970s. In turn Toro's attorney has called on an expert historian on Chile to testify in his behalf.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents of the Department of Homeland Security arrested Toro, a Chilean exile who had been living for decades in the United States, in 2007 while he was riding an Amtrak train in upstate New York. They had racially profiled him during an anti-immigrant sweep.

The Committee to Defend Toro is demanding political asylum and no deportation.

The next hearing will take place Jan. 11 at 26 Federal Plaza in New York City. Supporters are urged to attend a rally from 12 noon to 1 p.m. at Federal Plaza.

One week before this hearing, DHS filed a Supplemental Submission of Evidence that further demonstrates the dangerous political bent the government is taking in the case.

Toro is not being tried solely on his immigration status. The Justice Department decided months ago to make this case about the struggle of the Chilean movement against the U.S.-backed fascist regime headed by the murderous dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

At Toro's last court hearing in August, the U.S. Justice Department brought up

his political affiliation with the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Chile. The MIR is well-known and respected by revolutionaries worldwide. The MIR participated in and helped lead a mass revolutionary struggle in Chile, especially in the early 1970s during the government of President Salvador Allende.

After a coup in September 1973, the army and police massacred tens of thousands of people, including President Allende, as they overturned his pro-socialist democratically elected government. The U.S. puppet regime headed by Pinochet took over, ushering in nearly two decades of repression and state terror.

The MIR was the main organization that led the resistance to Pinochet in Chile. Toro was one of the principal MIR leaders.

The U.S. government submitted documents to the court last week that repeatedly name Toro as a principal MIR leader. The documents put the onus for the terror and bloodbath that swept Chile at that time on the victims of the fascist coup.

Tens of thousands were beaten, tortured, maimed and killed during the Pinochet regime. Toro heroically fought against that terror. But in the new documents the U.S. government defames Toro as a "dangerous extremist."

This bodes ill for Toro now. By asserting that MIR is a terrorist organization and that Toro is still affiliated with that terrorist organization, the government takes his case out of the realm of immigration law and inserts it into the so-called war on terror, putting Toro in a more dangerous position.

To counter the government's arguments, Peter Winn, professor of history at Tufts University specializing in Latin America and author of several books on Chile, is now scheduled to testify on Toro's behalf. Because Professor Winn has firsthand knowledge of the MIR's role in Chile and is considered a top expert on the subject, his testimony will be vital to Toro.

Toro's lawyer, Carlos Moreno, argues that elements of the Pinochet regime still linger in Chile and that deportation to Chile could lead to Toro's execution. Moreno also says it will be much more difficult for an immigration judge to counter the "terrorism" charge and grant political asylum.



Stop the deportation of Victor Toro.

PHOTO: NEXT LEFT NOTES

Toro and his spouse Nieves Ayress, also a leader and freedom fighter brutally tortured by Pinochet's police, made their home in the Bronx, where they have a family and deep roots in the community. Their extended family includes revolutionary artists such as

Rebel Díaz, who have dedicated their efforts to demand political asylum for Toro.

Both Toro and Ayress have been organizing for decades. They head La Peña del Bronx, a multi-issue fight-back organization. They are also active leaders in the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

To stay informed on the case of Victor Toro and for updates visit www.may1.info.

Mt. Gilead couple protests winter eviction

By Caleb T. Maupin
Mt. Gilead, Ohio

Greg Owen and Keesha Rutherford, after being unable to pay a series of illegal fees demanded by their landlord, discovered they were scheduled for eviction from the land they rent in order to have a place for their mobile home.

In desperation they contacted the Bail Out the People Movement. Owen, who frequently reads Workers World online, was familiar with the phrase, "It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees."

With the help of BOPM activists in Cleveland, a protest was organized in their hometown of Mt. Gilead on Dec. 26. Members of BOPM; Workers World Party; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together; the Lucasville Freedom Coalition; and others came in support of this struggle against eviction.

Keesha Rutherford held a sign reading, "Eviction in the winter, shame, shame, shame." She would be leaving her partner, Greg Owen, to live in Indiana. Rutherford had nowhere else to go after she was forced from her home during record cold temperatures and harsh winter winds. Owen stated that he had no idea where he

would turn for housing and would possibly be living in a tent in a nearby wooded area.

Owen informed the BOPM activists that a white supremacist organization has been active in the area recently. Twice a vehicle drove past the demonstration bearing a large confederate flag.

Though Mt. Gilead has a reputation of being a town where right-wing attitudes prevail, the amount of support for the protest was enormous. Workers driving by honked in support and gave thumbs up signs to the protestors. Workers from a local Pizza Hut donated a large pepperoni pizza to the protest after congratulating the protestors and shaking their hands for "standing up for what you believe in."

Word of the protest spread across Mt. Gilead, and many said they felt relieved to see that some were standing up against the dismal conditions that thousands in the area face amid the crises of unemployment, foreclosures and evictions.

Owen expressed interest in forming a BOPM chapter in Mt. Gilead, as many felt the same sense of outrage against bank bailouts, while several of the local factories have closed and many people have been evicted from their homes. □

R.I. rally honors fighter for justice



PHOTO: DALE

By Bill Bateman
Providence, R.I.

Sixty Rhode Islanders turned out at the State House to show their support for Henry Shelton, the 79-year-old founder and leader of The George Wiley Center who has been hospitalized with a stroke. Shelton created the organization in 1981 but has been fighting for economic justice for 50 years, marching in the 1960s with Dr. Martin Luther King and Cesar Chavez.

In October Henry had received the John Brown Award from the RI Peoples Assembly for his tireless work for economic justice.

Shelton and the Wiley Center have put their main focus on winning a law governing utilities that will prevent shutoffs for people with low incomes. The Wiley Center demands that low-income households have their utility costs capped at 8 percent of their income.

Wiley Center volunteers say that utility companies shut off more than 30,000 gas and electric customers last year and another 5,000 could lose service this winter.

The George Wiley Center has also embraced the call of the RI Unemployed Council for a Works Progress Administration-style jobs program and is calling for a pilot program to be undertaken in Rhode Island immediately. □



Mt. Gilead, Ohio, Dec. 26. Group fights unjust eviction.

WW PHOTO: CALEB MAUPIN

Sickness & struggle

The road to health care justice

By David Hoskins

Last of a series of nine articles on the decades-long battle for an adequate health system covering everyone in the United States, with commentary on how to continue the struggle.

Rising unemployment and out-of-control insurance premiums have intersected to cause almost 5 million people to lose their health coverage since the beginning of 2008, according to Families USA. This has exacerbated an already dire health care crisis that has left more than 50 million people uninsured and another 25 million underinsured.

While Republicans have blocked progress up and down the line, the Democrats too have failed to fight for real health reform, despite their control of the White House and both houses of Congress. Instead of providing health care justice, Democrats have opted to advance a bill that redistributes tax money away from poor and working-class people into the coffers of the big insurance companies.

The Democratic Party's approach delivers the insurance companies a captive market through a mandate that millions of the uninsured must purchase private coverage or face severe financial penalties. It is expected that such an approach will still leave as many as 23 million uninsured as of 2018.

A revolutionary approach to health reform

Radical crises like the one in health care require radical solutions.

Revolutionaries take into account the immediate drive for reform and the long-term struggle for revolution when making demands on the system. Minimum and maximum demands are the result of this process.

"Improved Medicare for all" is an appropriate minimum demand for this period. It is a demand that corresponds to the consciousness of the workers and responds to the crisis in health care. Improved Medicare for all means a single-payer system of national health insurance that organizes health financing through a single public agency and removes private insurance companies as the arbiters of who does and does not receive adequate care. It has been proposed in Congress as H.R. 676.

Improved Medicare for all represents an immediate demand that would fix some of the most glaring problems in health care. But what workers really need is a humane system of health care that entirely removes the profit motive out of the equation, from financing to delivery.

To be fully realized, this maximum working-class demand requires socialism. Socialist medicine — such as that in Cuba — is a system that is publicly financed and administered. Hospitals and clinics are democratically operated, with doctors and nurses working as public employees. Production of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment are public enterprises, designed to meet people's needs.

Rosa Luxemburg, the great founding leader of the German Communist Party, wrote on the relationship of reform to revolution in her aptly titled pamphlet, "Reform or Revolution." In this work published in 1900, Luxemburg eloquently asks, "Can we contrapose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means;

the social revolution, its aim."

Improved Medicare for all is the right thing to demand now. Only socialism — and by way of getting there social revolution — can provide the final answer for workers' health care needs.

The road to reform, and revolution

Despite disappointment in the Democratic Party's health reform legislation, there is a valuable lesson for workers and the oppressed when evaluating the actions of the present government. It is a lesson that revolutionaries should declare at every opportunity:

The Democratic Party is not the answer. It is not even a vehicle for reform, and electing Democrats is not a strategy for advancing working-class demands. With a popular first-term president, a filibuster-proof Senate, and a 79-seat majority in the House, the only reason the Democrats have not waged a serious fight for meaningful health care reform is because they do not want to wage such a fight. The only reason they have not used their super-majorities to pass truly universal health reform is because they are a capitalist party, and it is not in their interest to do so.

Workers will obtain neither reform — on health care or any other issue — nor revolution so long as the responsibility to fight for working-class demands is left up to the corporate-controlled Democratic Party.

Only a revolutionary workers' party, supported by a mass movement of workers and the oppressed, can lead us down the road from health care reform to revolution. Without such a party and movement it is not possible to achieve either improved Medicare for all or socialist medicine.

Workers World Party has been struggling to build a revolutionary party and contribute to a mass workers' movement

for over 50 years now.

It is this sort of dynamic workers' movement that is capable of challenging the entrenched interests of the big insurance and pharmaceutical companies. Glimpses of what this movement could look like can be viewed in embryonic form in key actions from 2009.

The April 3-4 National March on Wall Street broadened the attention of the movement as it expanded the focus from concentrating solely on the elected representatives of the bourgeoisie in Washington to taking on the ruling class directly and on its own turf.

In June 2009 the National People's Summit and Tent City in Detroit challenged a national gathering of bankers and business leaders and put the issue of jobs or income for all on the agenda in that devastated city.

The Sept. 20 National March for Jobs and Tent City in Pittsburgh elevated the issue of unemployment and challenged the G-20 finance ministers and central bankers who had gathered in Pittsburgh that week to bail out the people, not the banks.

This new year offers the opportunity to build on these actions and advance the workers' movement. Examples of specific actions are those planned by the Bail Out the People Movement on Jan. 15 in New York's Wall Street and on Jan. 18 by the Martin Luther King Planning Committee in Detroit that will focus on the demand for the right to a job or income for all.

These protests begin the task this year of building the type of workers' movement necessary to advance working-class demands — whether that is a job or income as a right, a moratorium on home foreclosures, or free quality health care for all.

The working class is sick from this crisis in health care. Struggle is the only path to a cure. □

WWP's political program, education and recruitment

Following are excerpts from a talk given by Richard Kossally on Nov. 15 at the Workers World Party 50th anniversary national conference. Go to workersworld.net.

Workers World Party is not perfect, but where we are most perfect, I believe, is at our core: the party's program. An important element of our program is that we always stand on the side of the oppressed. This is a simple, indisputable principle. Practicing it, however, is not as easy as it first seems, especially when the lines are blurred, which they often are. There were some blurry lines to navigate, for example, in the recent presidential elections in Iran.

Another element in our program is the importance we place on self-determination — the national question. We saw the hand of imperialism all over those student demonstrations in Iran [in the summer of 2009] and understood them to be an attempt to destabilize the government there. This is not to say that all the demonstrators were trying to destabilize Iran. We have no problem with genuinely progressive struggles, but that was not what was happening.

When there is a crisis like this, there is much confusion at first. The corporate

media goes full throttle with their misinformation campaigns. Unfortunately they snare in their web many well-meaning leftists and numerous other victims. The enemy class has in its arsenal a weapon that it often uses during such times: the big lie. Wars have been started this way.

The suspicious shooting of Neda Agha-Soltan in Iran might have been such a big lie. We asked some tough questions about her assassination in an editorial in our newspaper. We correctly navigated the blurry lines in Zimbabwe, but those weren't so blurry actually. Blurry lines can be overcome by wearing the correct lenses to examine them.

Program is the most important feature of a political party. Political education is also of utmost importance.

We must and we do avail ourselves of the great works and lessons from past struggles and the examples set by our working-class heroes. The world is not a static place; history has not ended. Following developments in our contemporary world and focusing our energy in the areas where we can best forward the needs of the working class is an obligation of a revolutionary party. This process must be continuous, the sources and modes various.

The sources will be the bourgeois press,

progressive literature, government statistics, legislation, corporate statistics and information from any source that we find useful. Much of this education has to be by members pursuing and analyzing events or situations near or far and when necessary disseminating their findings through the various means of communication we employ so that we can better focus our energies. The richness of this is evident at every party discussion.

Our party also conducts classes, usually in a discussion-group format or a presentation followed by discussion. We call our school the Marxist School of Theory and Struggle. This name reflects our political line. Theory without struggle is solely an academic exercise and program without practice is no program. Internal education is invaluable, especially for newer members. The classes are also available online.

Another important resource of the party is FIST, the youth group of Workers World. Young people can actually become a member of FIST before joining



Richard Kossally

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

the party. FIST now has a quarterly publication — Left Hook — and recently updated a 1971 Workers World pamphlet called "What Is Marxism All About?" FIST has started a blog radio show and has been doing great work on the campuses. If you are a young person — and we have a very liberal definition of youth — you should check them out.

Capitalism traditionally allows workers a big enough fraction of the value of their labor power so that they may reproduce future workers for exploitation. A working-class party like ours has to recruit new members, but our goal is not exploitation — it's revolution. I believe Workers World is the party in the United States that best represent the interests of our class and can be of the best assistance in the struggles ahead.

That is why you should join us. We have for 50 years practiced our principled Marxist political program without dilution through all the struggles that you have heard about here at this conference, and so many more that were not touched on. □

Consuela Lee was a liberator through education

By Monica Moorehead

Consuela Lee, an African-American jazz pianist, composer, arranger and music educator, passed away on Dec. 26 in Atlanta, Ga. She was 83 years old.

Ms. Lee had dedicated her life to helping preserve the integrity of African-American culture, which she consistently traced to the resistance to slavery, for future generations.

She was the founder of Springtree/Snow Hill Institute for the Performing Arts in Snow Hill, Ala., and its artistic director for almost 25 years. Snow Hill Normal and Industrial Institute was originally founded by William James Edwards, Ms. Lee's grandfather, in 1893 to provide an education and vocational trades to impoverished rural Black people, 30 years after the legal end of slavery. Today, Wilcox County remains one of the poorest counties in Alabama.

Ms. Lee characterized the Alabama schools as a death sentence for Black children.

SHI permanently closed its doors in 1973 due to a desegregation edict. In 1979, Ms. Lee went door to door in the Snow Hill community to poll the residents on whether they wanted to see a school in their community. When the majority voted yes, she left her teaching job at Norfolk State University to reopen her grandfather's school as a performing arts center. Ms. Lee had vowed since the age of 12 that she would one day return home to teach in the Snow Hill community.

Springtree's main goal was to emphasize the contributions of African Americans to the creative arts, especially through the media of music, drama and dance. Children throughout Wilcox County, from pre-school to high school, were encouraged to attend Springtree after their regular classes during the school year and also during the summer months. Ms. Lee also took a job as an artist-in-residence and traveled to schools in various Alabama counties to teach music in schools that had no music programs.

From 1980 until 2003, Snow Hill Day Celebrations included musical programs that attracted the Alabama community, and Snow Hill alumni and supporters from throughout the country. These programs were carried out on shoestring budgets, mainly small grants. In 1993, to help commemorate the centennial of the founding of SHI, filmmaker Spike Lee, who is Ms. Lee's nephew, the legendary folk artist Odetta and other artists attended.

In later years, other major artists such as drummer Max Roach, vibraphonist Milt Jackson and actor Delroy Lindo came to Snow Hill to support Ms. Lee's work with the community.

Ms. Lee's students, particularly a group of vibraphonists called Bright Glory, toured college campuses, film festivals and churches around the country to perform her arrangements of popular jazz selections written by Duke Ellington and other famous jazz composers. They appeared in 1988 on WABC's "Like It Is" TV show hosted by Gil Noble in New York City.

Jazz was in her blood

Ms. Lee, who succumbed Dec. 26 after a three-year battle with dementia/Alzheimer's disease, was born on Nov. 1, 1926, in Tallahassee, Fla., to Arnold W. and Alberta G. Lee. Her mother was the second child of SHI founder William James Edwards and Susie V. Edwards.

Ms. Lee's father was a cornet player



JAZZ PIANIST, TEACHER, ACTIVIST

Consuela Lee with Snow Hill students, 1985

WW PHOTO

and band director at Florida A&M.

Her mother was a classical pianist and teacher.

When she was 3 years old, she moved to Snow Hill and began to play the piano. Lee became a child prodigy, playing classical music such as Chopin's etudes.

When her father brought home a recording of Louis Armstrong's 1927 "Struttin' with Some Barbecue," however, Ms. Lee fell in love with jazz. This love affair only ended with her death. Among her favorite artists were Nat King Cole, Oscar Peterson, Art Tatum, Dizzy Gillespie and Sarah Vaughn.

Following her graduation from SHI in 1944, Ms. Lee attended the historical Black college Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn. There she heard an instructor, Alphonso Seville, play jazz and soon afterward she became his pupil.

In a July 31, 2001, New York Press interview, Lee told columnist Alexander Cockburn, "When I got to Fisk, and this was the odd thing about Black colleges, they didn't want us to play jazz, which they thought quite a cut below Bach, Beethoven and Chopin and the boys. They wanted us to concentrate on the Europeans. Of course we'd play jazz anyway. One day I went into the music building, 18 at the time, and there was this guy sitting there, playing like Tatum. I just stood there looking at him. He asked me my name and said, 'Are you a music student? Aha, do you play jazz?' 'No, but I'm trying.' He was a medical student at Meharry, a Black medical school in Nashville. We introduced ourselves and from then on it was Alfonso Seville. The heck with Beethoven. I got a C in piano. My report came home, my mother said, 'Consuela, a C in piano?' That's all she said. She's a very gentle person. I can't say enough about Alfonso Seville's influence on me as a pianist." (<http://tiny.cc/dQN1b>) Lee

wrote and performed on her 2001 CD, Piano Voices, "Prince of Piano – Alfonso Seville" in tribute to her teacher. At a Newark, N.J., nightclub, she unexpectedly accompanied singer Sarah Vaughn. In the early 1960s, Ms. Lee became choir director of the acclaimed Phillis Wheatley High School Glee Club in Houston, Texas. She taught music theory and composition at a number of historically Black colleges such as Alabama State, Hampton Institute, Talladega College and Norfolk State University.

Becoming more and more disillusioned with the restraints of college teaching, Ms. Lee decided that the time had come to move back to Snow Hill to teach. She wrote many songs and folk operas for her students and the Snow Hill community to perform.

Ms. Lee also led a legal campaign to help the community win control of the more than 1,400 timber-rich acres that Edwards had bought to begin the school. Corporate interests have been raking in lucrative profits from cutting timber while the Black community languishes in dire poverty.

In 1981, the Alabama Historical Commission cited Snow Hill Institute as a significant landmark. This recognition led to the federal government officially registering the school in 1995 as an historic site due to Ms. Lee's efforts to reopen the school.

Among her other accomplishments, Ms. Lee was the assistant music director for Spike Lee's second film, "School Daze." She also contributed music to the movie "The Best Man," directed by her other nephew, Malcolm Lee.

Among her numerous honors: She was inducted in 1992 into the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame. She received the Governor's Arts Award and the Mary McCleod Bethune Award. In 2005, she received

an award from the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative at the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Ala.

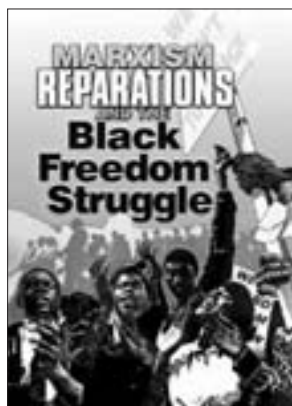
She performed at Carnegie Hall, Town Hall and Cami Hall in New York, and at the Hampton and Newport Jazz Festivals.

Ms. Lee was one of the members of the Board of Directors for the Birmingham Youth Jazz. She and the late trumpeter Jothan Callins were founding members of the jazz group Quartet Alabama. They were also founding members of the "21st Century Jazz Congress" along with other jazz musicians from Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and Alabama. The 21st Century Jazz Congress' mission was to teach the true origins of jazz to youth and to encourage them to perform and preserve jazz.

Ms. Lee was never afraid to confront racism. While she lived in Montgomery in the early 1950s, she actively supported the bus boycott which began with Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat to a white man. Ms. Lee refused to play the pro-confederate song "Dixie" when a customer requested she do so while she performed at a dinner club in Williamsburg, Va. She also attended anti-war demonstrations in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. war on Iraq.

Consuela Lee was more than just "the world's greatest musician" as her brother, bassist Bill Lee, called her. She was a champion for the liberation of Black people, especially in the rural areas. She wrote in a Feb. 17, 2006, article for Workers World: "The state of Alabama, and the corporate timber interests it is subservient to, have kept the Black community in semi-slavery conditions. Reparations must be paid for the crimes committed against the multi-generations of Black people in Alabama's Black Belt."

The writer is the daughter of Consuela Lee. Go to www.consuelalee.com. E-mail: mmoorehead@workers.org



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON

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Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of slavery, sharecropping and segregation Consuela Lee

Why Arab reactionary regimes do imperialism’s bidding

By Joyce Chediak

The corporate media in the imperialist countries have much to say about the Arab countries and developments in the Middle East. Rarely, however, do these media permit people from the Middle Eastern countries to speak for themselves. Recently Workers World interviewed Dr. Adel Samara, a Palestinian Marxist from the West Bank city of Ramallah. Dr. Samara is the author of more than 15 books on the relationship of forces in the Middle East, and editor-in chief of Kana’an, a quarterly magazine (kanaonline.org). His view was very different from the views covered in the New York Times or Fox TV.

Arab comprador regimes created by imperialism

Asked why the Egyptian government is aiding Israel and the U.S. in the siege and blockade of Gaza, Samara gave a history of how most Arab regimes were actually set up by imperialist powers to be dependants of imperialism and agents of reaction in the Middle East. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Treaty between the main imperialist powers, he said, “divided up the area, fragmenting it into small countries and put a king in every place. Weak and poor aristocratic elements agreed” to play this role and be financed by imperialism. “These rulers were unable to last without support of the imperialists. And they competed among themselves.”

This has led to a situation where “the imperialist powers, especially the U.S., pretend democracy while supporting the worst regimes in the history of the Arab nation.” Imperialism does this in an attempt “to prove there is no Arab nationality — this regime fights that one — ... and because the imperialists know that an increase in Arab unity won’t be good for Israel.”

Samara explained that from the time that the World Zionist Organization began meeting in 1897, and when Britain backed a Zionist state in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, it was clear the Zionists had plans for a pro-imperialist state in Palestine. Yet, “In 1948 and earlier, Arab regimes allowed Jews from Arab

‘The role of the Arab regimes is to contain, interfere with and destroy the Palestinian movement.’

WW interviews Palestinian Marxist
Dr. Adel Samara
Part 1

countries to go to Palestine. Arab regimes knew that Jews would be soldiers for a Jewish state in Palestine. Arab regimes contributed [to this state].”

Arab armies which fought for Palestine in 1948 staged revolts later

It is well known that in the 1948 war and campaign of Zionist-imperialist terrorism that erased Palestine from the map and replaced it with Israel, the Arab armies were defeated. Not so well known is the fact that “the 1948 Arab armies together were smaller than the Zionist army. The Arab regimes did not take defending Palestine seriously.”

There were exceptions. “In 1948, Iraqi forces fought the hardest and were in a strategic position on that line that became the 1948 dividing line. But they were forced to withdraw. As a result, the Iraqi regime lost credibility. ... Some of these Iraqi military leaders forced by their government to retreat from defending Palestine in 1948 took part in the 1958 revolution in Iraq,” which deposed a pro-British monarch.

Another exception occurred in the Egyptian army. “In 1948, Gamal Abdel Nasser, then an officer in the Egyptian army, was in Fallujah [Iraq]. He and other leaders of the Egyptian army refused to give up, and were under siege for several months.” The refusal of the Egyptian regime of King Farouk to back Nasser “created a bitterness between the Egyptian masses and the leadership. It is why, in 1954, the people supported the coup” of the young officers’ movement, headed by Nasser, which toppled King Farouk.

“From 1948 to 1966 Jews living in the Arab countries, Arab Jews, were allowed to go to Palestine, especially from Morocco and Iraq. In Iraq, from 1948 to 1958, the prime minister’s son was the owner of the Iraqi airline and airlifted [Iraqi Jews]

to Palestine. The Arab regimes gave the Israeli regime cheap labor to be exploited by Ashkenazi,” that is, Jewish people from Europe who formed Israel’s ruling class. Israel started the 1967 war, attacking Jordan, Egypt, Syria and seizing and occupying the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai. “The main goal in 1967 was to destroy the Nassarist regime in Egypt.” This was because in “1963, when a progressive current took power in Yemen and Saudi Arabia interfered, the Egyptian army went to Yemen to support [the new government].” The West was concerned that oil rich Saudi Arabia could be hit from Yemen.

“In 1967, the defeated Arab comprador regimes left the battle. From 1967 to 1973, most Arab regimes stopped contributing to the Palestine struggle.”

From 1965 to 1970 Palestinians initiated their own struggles, independently of the Arab comprador regimes. Dr. Samara said, “The Arab regimes tried to contain this struggle, mainly by giving money to the rightwing headed by [Yassir] Arafat, which became very rich. This containment continues today. The role of the Arab regimes is to contain, interfere with and destroy the Palestinian movement. This is one of the main reasons why a united Palestinian front never developed within the Palestine Liberation Organization.”

Egypt sides with Israel against Palestinian state

“The Arab regimes continued this policy,” he added. Anwar Sadat, who became the Egyptian head of state after Nasser’s death, turned his country again towards imperialism. In 1978, Sadat entered negotiations with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at Camp David and declared he would visit Israel. Sadat went along with Begin, who said, “What we will give the Palestinians is only autonomy and not a state.”

Dr. Samara pointed out that in 1970, in the Black September assault, King Hussein of Jordan attacked the Palestinian presence in Jordan, killing thousands and forcing the Palestinian Resistance into Lebanon.



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Dr. Adel Samara

And when Israel attacked Lebanon in 2006, he said, “Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan encouraged Israel to destroy Hezbollah.”

Now, “Egypt is enforcing the siege on Gaza — where there is no food, no access to health care or other key supplies.”

The current Arab comprador regimes are “against resistance. They are in the camp of the enemy and against peace for the Palestinian people. ... A change is needed in the Arab homeland” away from “the leaders who opened it up for all foreign powers.”

Nationalism of the comprador class vs. the nationalism of the workers

“Under direct and indirect colonialism there is an unequal exchange. Nationalism is an important tool in grouping people for developing cooperation and unity, especially in the Third World.”

But there is also a class divide, Dr. Samara said. “The nationalism of the comprador is dependant, and, selfish — only for the sake of the ruling class. It is tied to imperialism.

“The nationalism of the bourgeoisie is against socialism. ... The nationalism of the working class is nationalism open to socialism because this class has an interest in socialism.”

Dr. Samara emphasized the importance of Marxist theory. He continued, “Whether there is an organization or party of the popular classes is decisive. If the party is there, the comprador will not be able to divert the struggle. The fate of the revolution depends on if there is a communist party or not.” □

World solidarity with Gaza as Int’l aid caravans confront blockade

Continued from page 1

rain to hear British [Member of Parliament] George Galloway, founder of Viva Palestina, and convoy organizer Kevin Ovenden thank the Turkish people and government for supporting Viva Palestina’s third convoy to Gaza.

“After leaving Taksim Square the convoy proceeded to Adapazari, Turkey, to overnight in a sports stadium. Although the convoy arrived about 2 a.m., the citizens of Adapazari were there and ready to help. Locals swarmed the vehicles and buses to carry the 200 convoy participants’ sleeping gear and baggage into the stadium. A complete, hot meal had been prepared and was served without any personal concern for the late hour.” Members of the Turkish parliament are also taking part in the caravan.

Treated ‘like family’

Loeffler reports similar treatment in Syria, where various political groups fed



PHOTO: LUDO DE BRABANDER

caravan members and filled caravan vehicles with water, drinks, bread and snacks and where the Palestinians in the refugee camps “treated us, literally, as family.”

A Jan. 4 update on the VP Web site (www.vivapalestina.org) reports that a convoy ship carrying all 250 vehicles has arrived in Egypt and that all the vehicles

have passed through Egyptian customs. One flight of caravan members has landed in Al-Arish, Egypt, to join the vehicles; a second flight had engine trouble and was forced to return to Damascus, Syria.

Negotiations continue with the Egyptian government to allow VP passage through the border with Gaza. Egypt, which receives \$2 billion a year in aid from the U.S., is extending the steel wall that currently separates Egypt from Gaza to reach some 70 to 100 feet underground. The goal is to block the tunnels that Gazans use to procure all manner of supplies that they are otherwise not able to obtain because of the blockade. The barrier, designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is being built under the supervision

of French and U.S. intelligence officials. For its part, Egypt has been hostile to the VP caravan and out-and-out repressive to the other caravan, the Gaza Freedom March (www.gazafreedommarch.org). Not only has Egypt prevented 1,200 of the 1,400 GFM delegates from entering Gaza, but at a Jan. 1 protest near the Cairo Museum in Cairo, Egypt, some 400 activists were stomped, punched and kicked by hundreds of Egyptian police. The police then physically dragged GFM members into pens, where they were denied food, water or access to restrooms. Egyptian police also surrounded GFM members at one hotel, placing them under “house arrest” and preventing them from leaving.

Participants in the GFM include delegates from more than 40 countries, with such notables as author Alice Walker and Jewish holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein. They have carried out a hunger strike and numerous protests in Egypt to demand the caravan’s entry into Gaza. Despite the repressive tactics of the Egyptian police,

International solidarity protests with Palestine demand ‘Stop starving the people of Gaza’

By Brenda Ryan

Demonstrators around the world marched in solidarity with the people of Gaza on the one-year anniversary of Israel's massacre there and to demand an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Israel launched a 22-day attack on Gaza on Dec. 27, 2008, that killed 1,400 people, including hundreds of women and children. Thousands more were injured, losing arms, legs and eyes and becoming paralyzed. The United Nations Goldstone report found that Israel committed war crimes. These crimes included the dropping of white phosphorous, which burns through the skin and when inhaled causes people to bake to death from the inside, and DIME (Dense Inert Metal Explosive), which tears off limbs.

In **New York**, 1,000 people, mostly youth, gathered at a rally in Times Square on Dec. 27 and marched to the Israeli Mission to the United Nations. They stopped at the Egyptian Mission to demand that the government let the Viva Palestina international aid convoy enter Egypt to reach Gaza. A member of the convoy, which is led by British MP George Galloway, spoke to the rally by phone. The government of Egypt refused to let the convoy pass through the Red Sea port of Nuweiba. (The convoy finally entered Egypt through the port of Al-Arish on Jan. 3.)

The New York protest was organized by Al-Awda New York — the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, American Muslims for Palestine, Arab Muslim American Foundation, MAS Freedom Foundation, the International Action Center and others.

Cities throughout the United States held marches and vigils, including **Boston; Chicago; Denver; Dubuque; Iowa; Minneapolis; and San Francisco.**

Almost 200 people attended a vigil/protest in solidarity with the Gaza Freedom March in **Dearborn, Mich.**, on Dec. 29. The protest was organized by the recently-formed Michigan Coalition for Justice in Palestine. After the vigil, protesters marched to the Lebanese Heritage Club for an assembly where committees

the caravan reports receiving much support from Egyptians in the streets.

A Cairo declaration was created and signed by more than 100 members of the caravan, which includes delegates from South Africa. Noting “the many strong similarities between apartheid Israel and the former apartheid regime in South Africa,” the declaration proposed a number of tactics similar to those used to defeat apartheid in South Africa, as well as a speaking tour involving both Palestinian and South African trade unionists.

Protests around the U.S. and around the world marked the one-year anniversary of the attack on Gaza and demanded entry into Gaza for both the VP and GFM caravans. The attack, which began on Dec. 27, 2008, left 1,400 dead, many of them children, and tens of thousand paralyzed when U.S.-made weapons were fired at schools, hospitals and homes. The continuing blockade augmented the suffering after the attack; many died due to the lack of medical equipment and resources. Now, many Gazan families sleep in tents this winter because the materials needed to rebuild their homes are prohibited by Israel's blockade against the area. □



ATLANTA

PHOTO: AL VIOLA



SAN FRANCISCO

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

were organized to initiate follow-up activities in Michigan.

On Dec. 28, there was a protest in front of the Israeli consulate in **Atlanta** raising the same issues. There were about 125 people, very multi-national, mostly young. It was called by Movement to End Israeli Apartheid-Ga, which formed last spring specifically to conduct “boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS)” campaigns.

The **Houston** Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine held a spirited demonstration on the one-year anniversary of the Israeli attack on Gaza. Around 400 people came out with Palestinian flags flying high and bright signs and banners displayed on all four corners of the busiest intersection in the U.S.'s fourth-largest city. Palestinians were joined by other Arab people, a group from Turkey, African Americans, whites, Mexicanos/as, Chicanos/as and other Latinos/as.

A large contingent of students from the University of Houston attended and led chants. Speeches were given in Arabic, Spanish, Turkish and English. A loud cheer went up when a speaker said he had just gotten an update from Turkey and over 1 million people in **Turkey** were also protesting.

Other demonstrations were held in **Toronto, Rome, Madrid, Dublin, Dusseldorf** and **Venice**, among many other cities. More than 1,000 people marched in **Tel Aviv** on Jan. 2 demanding an end to the blockade of Gaza. The blockade has prevented food, medicine and construction material from entering and continues to cause malnutrition, starvation, misery and death.

Gloria Rubac, Dianne Mathiowetz and Mike Shane contributed to this report.



HOUSTON

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC



NEW YORK

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Impact on Chrysler as Italian autoworkers strike over plant closings

Martha Grevatt

In December a two-day strike halted production at the FIAT automobile assembly plant in Termini Imerese, near Palermo, in Sicily. Workers were protesting FIAT’s plans to shut down the plant, which employs 1,400 workers, this year. As of Jan. 3 the Termini Imarese workers are on temporary layoff until Jan. 7.

Prior to the two-day work stoppage, workers in Termini Imarese held a general strike on Dec. 14 to protest the closing. Over 10,000 workers and youth attended a rally that day, which also had the support of local clergy and elected officials, according to the Federation of Italian Metalworkers (FIOM). Earlier in the month FIOM struck the Sicilian LEA plant, which supplies the FIAT plant and may also close.

Sicily has one of the highest unemployment rates in all of Europe; unemployment there is much higher than on the

Italian mainland. The island will take another strong blow if FIAT and its suppliers cease production.

This strike completes a year of sporadic auto strikes by FIOM. FIAT workers in Pomigliano d’Arco, near Naples, struck in solidarity with the Sicilian workers and to protest extended layoffs and the possible closing of their plant.

Italian autoworkers have a long history of militant class struggle, going back to the factory occupations of 1919-1921 and the powerful movement of 1968-1969. A two-month strike in 2002 halted the closing of the Termini Imarese plant at that time. Nevertheless the Italian working class, like workers all over the world, has been devastated by decades of capitalist restructuring.

On May 17, 15,000 workers demonstrated outside FIAT’s world headquarters in Turin. At that time FIAT’s takeover of Chrysler was all but certain and the company was trying to purchase General

Motors’ European operations. Workers came from all over Italy and Sicily to protest anticipated job cuts.

The theme of the May protest, “We are FIAT,” was a direct challenge to the capitalist media’s portrayal of FIAT CEO Sergio Marchionne — who is now the CEO of Chrysler — as the person who singlehandedly “turned the company around.” While FIAT was unsuccessful in acquiring GM’s Opel, the latest “turnaround” plan — to increase production by 50 percent while simultaneously closing plants and cutting jobs — is obviously an attack on the workers. This is the purpose of the \$8 billion investment FIAT plans to make in its Italian operations. The company will also begin building FIAT vehicles at Chrysler plants in Mexico, Canada and possibly the U.S.

This is the same “turnaround” strategy — hailed in capitalist circles — by which Ford has returned to making billions in profits. In the past few years Ford has

reduced its union workforce by over 50 percent. Now Ford’s market share has increased in relation to GM and Chrysler and its overall sales are improving. Its stock prices have nearly quintupled since the beginning of the year. Yet the company just announced plans to offer another round of buyouts designed to permanently shrink the workforce even more.

This is exactly what Marchionne hopes to achieve at Chrysler. While projecting increased market share, Chrysler has not reversed plans to close plants in Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin. At the same time, the drive to intensify the brutal restructuring is behind the latest managerial shakeup — the departure of CEO Fritz Henderson, who had replaced Rick Wagoner earlier this year — at GM.

Workers all over the world need to unite and militantly resist the attacks on their jobs. This is the only “turnaround” strategy that has any hope of success. □

‘Debt trap’: Greek workers reject austerity program

By G. Dunkel

Thousands of Greek workers took to the streets in 63 cities on Dec. 17, called out by unions protesting a government austerity program. The All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), which is close to the Greek Communist Party, and Syriza, the Coalition of the Radical Left, supported the action.

This strong workers’ action took place in Greece, but it was provoked by a worldwide attack on the working class. This affects workers especially in the countries hit hardest by the global capitalist economic crisis, including some countries that maintained a veneer of prosperity through borrowing but are now falling into what is called a “debt trap.”

This prosperity mainly benefited the wealthy, already prosperous elites that controlled countries like Dubai and Greece. But budget deficits in the world’s industrialized countries have more than tripled since the financial crisis shook the world in 2008.

Economists say that a country is in a

“debt trap” when its public debt is greater than what it produces in a year — all the goods and services created in its internal economy, its GDP — and its economy is not growing fast enough to pay the interest on its debt.

Greece’s public debt was 113 percent of its GDP in 2009 and is forecast to be 125 percent of its GDP in 2010. Its economy shrank by 1.1 percent in 2009 and is forecast to decline a bit in 2010. It most definitely is in a debt trap. (Figures from Eurostat.)

The big imperialist banks are only lending to their most affluent and stable customers. Thus, companies and customers have turned to the bond market for the cash they need to operate. Moody’s and S&P, two bond ratings agencies, recently downgraded Greece’s bonds.

Greece’s new Socialist Party government won the Oct. 4 elections on a platform to tax the rich and help the poor. When it was faced with an edict from the European Central Bank after its credit rating was cut, Prime Minister George Spandrels didn’t hesitate to announce

an austerity program. He planned to cut spending on health by 10 percent, freeze salaries over \$3,000 a month and impose a freeze on hiring.

The government also called out 10,000 cops to repress the demonstration in Athens. PAME’s banner on the façade of the Finance Ministry read, “Arise! The government and the plutocracy are dismantling Social Security.” (L’Humanité, Dec. 17)

Greece is not the only country in Western Europe whose economy is weighed down by debt. Italy’s debt at the end of 2008, the last period for which Eurostat has data, was 105 percent of its GDP. Portugal, which has kept its debt within the Eurozone limits, has had no growth. Ireland has seen its economy shrink by 7 to 8 percent since the financial crisis started and the Irish government has committed to \$4 billion worth of budget cuts, including slashing salaries for 400,000 public employees.

Spain’s overall unemployment rate is 19.3 percent, with a youth unemployment rate of 39.2 percent. The rates for youth, which include people from the age of 16

up to age 25, range from 18.5 percent in Portugal to 24 to 27 percent in Ireland, Greece and Italy.

None of these five countries has a central bank like the Federal Reserve in the U.S., so none could adopt a stimulus package like the one the U.S. put together to attempt to boost its economy. In order for the local capitalists to get the advantages of participating in the world’s largest market in the Eurozone, they had to give up a major part of their sovereign control of their economies and the ability to serve the needs of their citizens.

Germany and France, the dominant imperialist economic powers in the European Union, have effective control of the European Central Bank. German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, representing German bankers, said the following about Greece’s problems: “It would be misplaced solidarity if we were to support Greece with financial help.” (Reuters, Dec. 30)

Of course, this “misplaced solidarity” might keep people from going homeless or hungry, but that is not really the concern of the German ruling class. □

“With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that.”

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SAM MARCY

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HIGH TECH, LOW PAY
A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class
By Sam Marcy, Second Edition with a new introduction by Fred Goldstein

What’s behind Detroit incident?

U.S. targets Yemen, harasses Nigeria

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

It appears from statements by Obama administration officials and U.S. intelligence sources that further military attacks are being planned against Yemen. This impoverished country on the Arabian Peninsula has been bombed several times in recent weeks. Reports indicate that the U.S. is behind these actions, in which dozens of people are reported to have been killed.

Gen. David H. Petraeus, the U.S. military commander for Iraq and Afghanistan, visited Yemen on Jan. 2 and met with President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Around the same time, embassies of three leading imperialist states — the U.S., Britain and France — were closed, purportedly in response to threats from al-Qaida.

Yemen is now being described as dangerous in the same way that Afghanistan was labeled in 2001. The notion of a “failed state,” used against Afghanistan to justify the ongoing U.S. invasion and occupation there, is now being applied to Yemen.

Commentary by a constant flow of U.S. intelligence operatives and militarists is being put forward in the corporate media to condition the people for more aggressive military action against Yemen.

Over the last eight years hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Palestine, Pakistan and other countries targeted in the U.S. “war on terrorism.” The U.S. has the highest defense budget in its history, exceeding the combined military expenditures of all other nations in the world combined.

The latest “terrorist threat” dominating the corporate media is crowding out the economic crisis inflicted upon the people of the U.S. and the world.

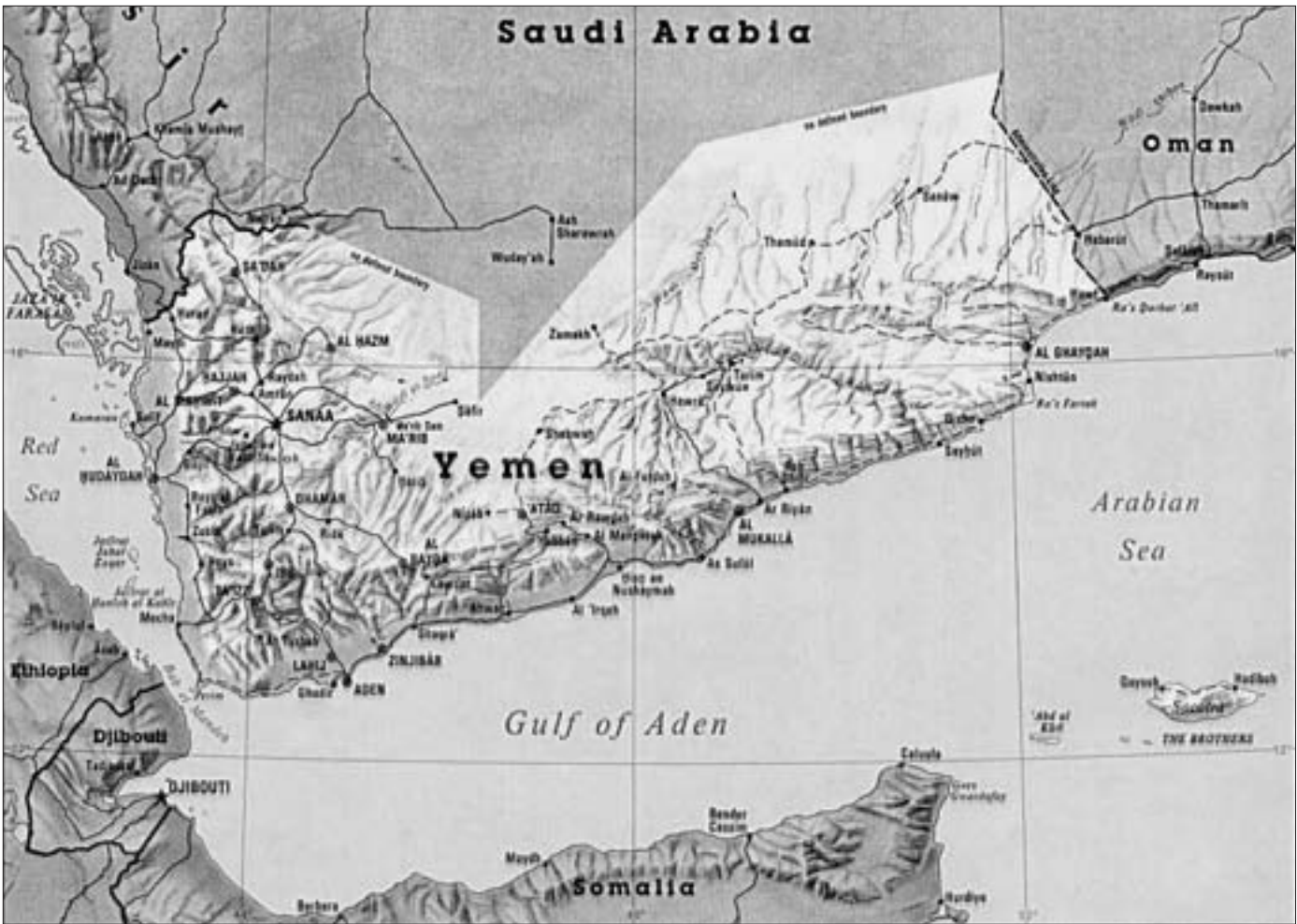
Meanwhile, millions in the U.S. will lose their jobs, homes, health care and education over the next year while being told that the source of their problems is in Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria. The Pentagon, through the corporate media, say that instability and terrorism require greater military expenditures.

Background to the present situation

On Dec. 25, U.S. authorities arrested a 23-year-old Nigerian, Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab, aboard Northwest/Delta Airlines Flight 253 from Amsterdam after it landed in Detroit. He is alleged to have tried to carry out a terrorist attack, resulting in a small fire aboard the plane. The authorities say Abdul Mutallab was either connected with al-Qaida or was sympathetic to its aims.

This incident raises a number of serious questions. Abdul Mutallab was reportedly granted a multiple-entry visa into the United States in June 2008, but this November his father, Alhaji Umaru Abdul Mutallab, a prominent and wealthy Nigerian banker, warned the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria about concerns related to his son’s behavior. The senior Mutallab had served as minister of economic development and reconstruction during the mid-1970s in the federal Nigerian government, then under military rule.

Why was Abdul Mutallab allowed to maintain his U.S. visa status and board a plane bound for the United States? There have been reports that he spent time in the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, implying a connection with al-Qaida. However, no specific evidence has emerged of such links.



Corporate media reports claim that Mutallab attempted to ignite substances that could have done substantial damage to the aircraft. What were they? What if these unidentified chemicals could not cause any real damage to the plane? After all, the suspect was the only person seriously injured. Could this incident have been something other than what is being widely reported by media outlets in the U.S. and internationally?

U.S. intelligence and media spokespersons have stated that Yemen is a base for al-Qaida. However, it is also a major field of operations for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon. The Yemeni government is in a military struggle with Islamic opposition groups; the country is divided politically and regionally.

On Dec. 24 — the day before the arrest of Mutallab — the Yemeni military carried out air strikes on what the Associated Press called “suspected al-Qaida hideouts,” killing at least 30 “militants” in a remote area of the country. The strikes “were carried out with U.S. and Saudi intelligence help. ... The newly aggressive Yemeni campaign against al-Qaida is being boosted by a dose of American aid, a reflection of Washington’s concerns about al-Qaida’s presence in a highly strategic location on the border with oil-rich ally Saudi Arabia.” (AP, Dec. 25)

This same article points out that “The Pentagon recently confirmed it has poured nearly \$70 million in military aid into Yemen this year — compared with none in 2008. The U.S. military has boosted its counterterrorism training for Yemeni forces and is providing more intelligence, according to U.S. officials and analysts.”

Implications for Nigeria

In Nigeria some months ago the military and police killed several hundred people in a crackdown against an Islamic group, Boko Haram, whose leader was killed by the police. There is also a flareup in fighting in the Niger Delta region between groups fighting the Western-based oil firms that dominate the area and the federal government’s joint terrorism task force.

In a significant development, several Western-based transnational oil firms are threatening the Nigerian economy because of a deal to export oil to the People’s

Republic of China that will bring Nigeria \$50 billion in revenue. (Nigerian Daily Trust, Dec. 21)

As a result of the Dec. 25 incident, Nigerian nationals, along with people from a number of other states, have been targeted for special scrutiny at U.S. airports and flights bound for the country. The Transportation Security Administration also targets people from Cuba, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Iran, Sudan, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

A Jan. 4 editorial in the Nigerian Vanguard newspaper angrily lashed out at the discriminatory policies instituted by the U.S. against Nigerian nationals. It challenged the Nigerian government to reject these new security measures imposed by the Obama administration.

This editorial says in part that “Nigerian authorities must stand up against the American posture of trying to label us a country of terrorists after the Christmas Day incident in which 23-year-old Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab tried to blow up a passenger aircraft as it was in landing in Detroit. Details of the case as they evolve have not shown any complicity on the part of Nigerian authorities or security lapses at the Murtala Muhammad Airport (Lagos) from which Mutallab’s flight originated.” (Vanguard, Jan. 4)

The editorial continues by pointing out that “As is their usual practice, American agencies find it convenient to blame others for everything. If they had taken the concerns on Farouk serious, the incident could have been avoided. Their first reaction was to heap the blame on Nigerians and they carried on as if the attack had the support of all Nigerians.”

Stepped up intervention and repression

These developments cannot be separated from the recent escalation of the U.S. war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Barack Obama announced at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on Dec. 1 that his administration would be sending another 30,000 occupation troops into Afghanistan. This act is being carried out despite the overwhelming popular opposition in the United States to escalation of the Afghan war.

In Detroit, the FBI assassinated an Afri-

can-American imam on Oct. 28. Investigation into the incident is being obstructed on several levels, including the refusal of authorities to release the autopsy of the slain Islamic leader, Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, who had worked with the poor for decades on the city’s west side. The assassination has drawn protests and calls for an independent investigation.

Could Abdul Mutallab be a pawn in a scenario of international intelligence intrigue controlled and manipulated by the United States? Such threats of terrorism have been used in the past to deflect the attention of the people in the U.S. away from the worsening economic and political crisis facing the country.

Since 2001 the people of the United States have been subjected to reports of one foreign plot and conspiracy after another. At the same time, trillions of dollars have been literally stolen from them through real estate, insurance and bank fraud schemes, which the taxpayers have been forced to absorb. Unemployment rates are the highest since the Great Depression and a new upsurge in home foreclosures and evictions is forecast for 2010.

The plane incident, besides being used to intensify police presence at airports and throughout U.S. society, can also be utilized to justify and sway public opinion towards supporting the wars of occupation in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq and the extension of these imperialist efforts into the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden, the Indian Ocean and Yemen.

One thing is certain. The United States government and ruling class have nothing to offer the people other than war, intensified domestic surveillance and economic austerity. If they can bombard the airwaves with threats of terrorism, it will block any real discussion about the economic crisis in the corporate-controlled media, which is heavily biased towards the Pentagon and Wall Street.

The question of “security” will take priority over the economic crisis, which has resulted in 34 million people out of work, the foreclosure of millions of homes, the closing of hundreds of schools and the forcing of tens of thousands of university students away from their studies due to the monumental escalation of fees and cutbacks in financial assistance. □

Stopping Terrorism 101

The imperialists have always used catchy phrases to sell their predatory wars. World War I was “the war to end all wars.” They’d rather we forgot about that concept.

The modern war for economic subjugation of oppressed nations by the small class of super-rich capitalists is labeled “the war on terrorism.” The world will not be a safe place, say the apologists for imperialism — starting with the military-political establishment and reflected in every major newspaper and broadcast — until the terrorists have been rooted out and destroyed, especially in that vast area of West Asia full of natural resources that is also known as the Middle East.

That is the interpretation put by the Obama administration and all the major news sources on the incident in which a Nigerian passenger on a flight to Detroit allegedly tried to blow himself up, and also on the attack on a CIA base in Afghanistan.

There is now a full-court press by the ruling establishment to browbeat the people of the United States into supporting the “surge” in Afghanistan, the drone-guided missile and Special Forces attacks in Pakistan, and the U.S.-engineered offensives in Yemen and Somalia. All this is supposedly necessary to protect the people here against terrorist attacks.

But who are the real terrorists? It is one of the biggest of the Big Lies saturating imperialist culture that those who have stockpiled the deadliest weapons, and frequently use them, must never be called terrorists.

Those who dropped atomic bombs on cities full of people and still have huge stockpiles of these doomsday weapons, those who have spent the people’s tax money on the world’s biggest fleets of warships and planes, who send high-alti-

tude bombers to rain down death on the other side of the earth, who can unleash powerful missiles, “bunker-busting” bombs, napalm and white phosphorus on small villages — in a word, the U.S. imperialists — are supposed to be above criticism.

They present themselves as the “good guys” with the right to go anywhere and do anything they deem necessary. Those who fight back with home-made weapons, often knowingly sacrificing their lives, are the “bad guys.” But that’s not the view of most of the rest of the world.

In fact, the opposite is true. The massive death and destruction dealt every day by the Pentagon in many countries is what has enraged the peoples there and their co-religionists to the point that some are ready to die in attacks on U.S. targets.

It is not at all naïve to think that withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan will save lives, not just of the peoples there but here in the United States, too.

Here is a case in point: Back in March 2004, the train system in Madrid was bombed, with heavy loss of life, just three days before a general election and a year after the rightist Spanish government had, under U.S. pressure, agreed to join the invasion force in Iraq. The government attempted to use the bombings to strengthen its standing in the polls, but the electorate thought otherwise and voted the government out. Soon the new government withdrew its troops from Iraq. No one from the Middle East or Asia has carried out bombings there since.

There is only one way to end the carnage that the imperialists have unleashed. It is for the U.S. to get out of the Middle East and allow the people there to decide their own destiny. □

Revolution & finances

The following are excerpts from a talk given by Steve Kirschbaum on Nov. 15 at the Workers World Party 50th anniversary national conference. Go to worker-world.net.

Finances and resources for literature, picket signs, airfare, printing, Web costs, and an endless list of necessities for waging the global class struggle must always be uppermost in our minds.

Revolutionaries and revolutionary organizations as well as any organizations of the working class, such as unions and community groups, have wrestled with this critical issue throughout the history of class struggle.

The most decisive and indispensable resource of any revolutionary party is sitting right here in this hall — class conscious, disciplined, self-sacrificing revolutionary fighters. To take on the racist, blood-thirsty ruling class, however, militant zeal is not enough.

I’m currently reading the spoken-autobiography “Fidel Castro,” a magnificent book of over 100 hours of comrade Fidel’s revolutionary wisdom. In it he describes Cuba’s heroic internationalism in Africa.

From 1975 to 1991 revolutionary Cuba sent more than 300,000 combatants and 50,000 civilians to Angola to aid in the defeat of reactionaries, U.S. CIA puppets and the racist apartheid South African military. It was a historic rout of racism and a tremendous victory for liberation.

Fidel explains that the all-voluntary Cuban fighters were not only armed with revolutionary zeal but with hundreds of tanks, artillery pieces, more than 1,000 anti-aircraft weapons and MiG-23 air units. In a word, resources.

In the November 1994 pre-conference document by Comrade Sam Marcy — “Building a Proletarian Party” — Sam addresses this critical question: “Nothing would be worse for the party than to be confronted with opportunities to engage in new class battles and not have the wherewithal to sustain them. ...

A party of workers and oppressed

“There is nothing worse for a party which has anticipated the development of the class struggle and analyzed its driving forces than to find when the opportune time arrives that it is unable to participate because of its financial situation.”

We are a party of workers and oppressed people who are a fierce and mortal enemy of the ruling class and all its agents. As such we don’t receive strings-attached grants and the like. Our politics are not for sale. Unlike others in our movement who allow “funding streams” and “agency allocations” to dictate what they say and do, we speak and act in our own voice. Therefore the task of fueling and funding our revolution falls on every single member and friend. It is too vital a



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Steve Kirschbaum

necessity for it to be viewed as the responsibility of a few comrades or committees.

Every union-conscious worker knows that financing our unions, as the workers’ first line of defense against the evils of capitalism, is every member’s responsibility. Dues are required for fighting the day-to-day battles — firings, disciplines, corporate theft on the job, for building strike funds to provide concrete solidarity and engaging in struggles for justice in the community. In cases where unions are led by class-conscious leaders like Steel Workers 8751, dues provided resources to bring the staff of officers and stewards and a sound truck to Pittsburgh to join that historic action against the G20.

Unions organizationally assure finances through “union shops” and automatic dues check off. Bosses understand the value of this and fight it tooth and nail. We cannot do that yet, although a modified version is possible with new technology where comrades and friends can arrange automatic payment from their accounts to the party.

As with all organizational questions the party proceeds based on our political principles. Every comrade’s situation is unique — some working, some unemployed, some in relatively good-paying union jobs, some on disability benefits. The key is that every comrade and friend owns the problem of finances and resources and gives what they can, and/or helps find creative ways to raise funds. We must always pass the hat, put out the donation can and probe every available opportunity to get our class the funds required to finance the struggle for liberation.

We take the analysis of a global class struggle seriously and literally. Our class cannot afford to have its vanguard run out of ammo! Build the WWP Fighting Fund! □

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MUNDO OBRERO

Acusaciones en muerte a golpes de inmigrante

Continúa de página 12

si entablaba una demanda. Su demanda dice que Nestor amenazó con que Murphy “no saldría vivo de la cárcel de Shenandoah ... que acabaría como ese mexicano que se ‘ahorcó’ ”.

“La policía se portó como jefes guerrieristas feudales en esta pequeña ciudad carbonera y la gente tenía miedo de ellos”, dijo el abogado John Karoly, quien representa a Murphy y a los padres de Vega en demandas federales contra la policía y el municipio. Karoly añadió: “El patrón comienza a aparecer verdaderamente [mostrando] que las minorías han recibido el peso de su abuso”. (Philly.com, 16 de diciembre)

Defensores latinos/as que vieron la muerte de Ramírez como parte de una ola creciente de crímenes raciales y de odio contra inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos, denunciaron los veredictos de mayo. Desde la muerte, el Fondo de Defensa Legal y Educacional Mexicano Americano (MALDEF) ha trabajado de cerca con la familia Ramírez para conseguir justicia. Ellos montaron la exitosa campaña nacional de peticiones que resultó en las

acusaciones al pedir al Departamento de Justicia que investigara la muerte como crimen de odio.

Gladys Limon, una abogada de MALDEF, dijo que “Cada vida vale y las acciones violentas provocadas por el odio y la intolerancia no serán toleradas en ninguna parte”.

Teresa Gutiérrez, co-coordinadora de la Coalición Primero de Mayo de Nueva York para los Derechos de Trabajadores/as e Inmigrantes, dijo a Workers World/Mundo Obrero que “El encubrimiento del brutal asesinato de Luís Ramírez es otro ejemplo de la feroz guerra contra los/as inmigrantes en este país. Por otro lado, la resistencia de la familia de Luís Ramírez, especialmente la de su compañera Crystal Dillman, quien no solamente ha hablado con valentía en contra del asesinato de su marido, sino que ha estado hablando en defensa de todos/as los/as inmigrantes, es una señal de la creciente disposición de lucha entre todos/as los/as inmigrantes y sus defensores/as.

“En el Primero de Mayo de 2010 es seguro que Luís Ramírez será recordado a través del país”. □

Fidel's 'Reflections'

The truth about Copenhagen

The following is excerpted from Dec. 19 "Reflections" by Fidel Castro Ruz. Read the entire document by the Cuban revolutionary leader at www.workers.org.

The youth are more interested than anyone else in the future. Until very recently, the discussion revolved around the kind of society we would have. Today, the discussion centers on whether human society will survive.

These are not dramatic phrases. We must get used to the true facts. Hope is the last thing human beings can relinquish. With truthful arguments, men and women of all ages, especially young people, have waged an exemplary battle at the Summit and taught the world a great lesson.

If anything significant was achieved in the Danish capital, it was that the media coverage allowed the world public to watch the political chaos created there and the humiliating treatment accorded to heads of states or governments, ministers and thousands of representatives of social movements and institutions who in hope and expectation traveled to Copenhagen. The brutal repression of peaceful

protesters by the police was a reminder of the behavior of the Nazi assault troops that occupied neighboring Denmark in April 1940.

But no one could have thought that on Dec. 18, the last day of the Summit, this would be suspended by the Danish government — a NATO ally associated with the carnage in Afghanistan — to offer the conference's plenary hall to President Obama for a meeting where only he and a selected group of guests, 16 in all, would have the exclusive right to speak.

Obama's deceitful, demagogic and ambiguous remarks failed to involve a binding commitment and ignored the Kyoto Framework Convention. He then left the room shortly after listening to a few other speakers. Among those invited to take the floor were the highest industrialized nations, several emerging economies and some of the poorest countries in the world. The leaders and representatives of over 170 countries were only allowed to listen.

At the end of the speeches of the 16 chosen, Bolivian President Evo Morales, with the authority of his indigenous Aymara origin and his recent re-election with 65 percent of the vote, as well as the support

of two-thirds of the Bolivian House and Senate, requested the floor. The Danish president had no choice but to yield to the insistence of the other delegations.

When Evo had concluded his wise and deep observations, the Danish had to give the floor to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Both speeches will be registered by history as examples of short and timely remarks. Then, with their mission duly accomplished they both left for their respective countries. But when Obama disappeared, he had yet to fulfill his task in the host country.

From the evening of Dec. 17 and the early morning hours of Dec. 18, the Prime Minister of Denmark and senior representatives of the United States had been meeting with the Chair of the European Commission and the leaders of 27 nations to introduce to them — on behalf of Obama — a draft agreement in whose elaboration none of the other leaders of the rest of the world had taken part. It was an antidemocratic and practically clandestine initiative that disregarded the thousands of representatives of social movements, scientific and religious institutions and other participants in the Summit.

Through the night of Dec. 18 and until 3 a.m. of Dec. 19, when many heads of state had already departed, the representatives of the countries waited for the resumption of the sessions and the conclusion of the event. Throughout Dec 18, Obama held meetings and press conferences, and the European leaders did the same. Then they left.

Something unexpected happened then: At three in the morning of Dec. 19, the Prime Minister of Denmark convened a meeting to conclude the Summit. By then, the countries were represented by ministers, officials, ambassadors and technical staff.

However, an amazing battle was waged that morning by a group of representatives of Third World countries challenging the attempt by Obama and the wealthiest on the planet to introduce a document imposed by the United States as one agreed by consensus in the Summit.

The representative of Venezuela, Claudia Salerno, showed with impressive energy her right hand bleeding from strongly slamming on the table to claim her right to take the floor. Her tone of voice and the dignity of her arguments will never be forgotten. □

Bombing at CIA base exposes weakness of U.S. occupation

By John Catalinotto

A bomb explosion in a Central Intelligence Agency camp in Khost Province of Afghanistan on Dec. 30 resulted in the deaths of seven experienced operatives, including the base commander. The attack struck a heavy blow against the U.S.-led occupation. It has changed the ground rules for the U.S. spy organization and evoked threats from U.S. President Barack Obama and CIA head Leon Panetta.

Despite the CIA and military posturing and threats of revenge, the successful bomb strike at an important U.S. base underlines the basic weaknesses of U.S. imperialism in carrying out the latest war escalation and unpopular occupation of Afghanistan.

On a tactical level, the CIA camp bombing meant the loss of operatives who had knowledge of local customs and languages and decades of experience in Afghanistan. Strategically, it means the U.S. and NATO occupation forces will more than ever treat every Afghan as an enemy. That will bury any possibility of the U.S. "winning hearts and minds" of one part of Afghan society in its attempt to divide and conquer Afghanistan.

"Those killed included experienced front-line officers, and their knowledge and expertise will be sorely missed," said Henry A. Crumpton, who led the CIA campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002." (Wall Street Journal, Jan. 2)

CIA won't know 'who to trust'

A Jan. 2 Reuters report described the other part of the loss, quoting a former CIA officer: "This is a huge blow to the agency. It's a close-knit group. They're not going to know who to trust now."

U.S. officials and the corporate media often distort the truth, and more so in a war situation. Nevertheless, reports in

the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and the Washington Post — which involve interviews with current and former CIA officials — indicate that something like the following may have occurred:

The personnel at Forward Operating Base Chapman in Khost province had been focusing on two main tasks: finding targets for the unpiloted "drones" to launch rockets against and investigating that part of the Afghan resistance known as the "Haqqani network," so that U.S. Special Forces or mercenary "contractors" could hunt them down and kill their members and leaders. FOB Chapman used informants both in Afghanistan and in nearby Pakistan.

Like al-Qaida, the Haqqani network was a U.S. ally in the battle against the Soviet Union, when the Soviet Army was assisting the progressive Afghan government from 1979 to 1989. Now, however, the Haqqani network is a Taliban ally. Using information provided by FOB Chapman, both drones and ground forces killed some of the Haqqani leaders throughout 2009.

The Dec. 30 bombing attack was by someone the CIA operatives knew, someone who was considered an Afghan informant or potential informant. He was able to get through base security and enter a room where at least 13 CIA or "contractors," that is, mercenaries, were present, having come to hear the informant's report. When the bomb exploded, the Afghan died along with seven CIA operatives. Six others were wounded.

Resistance forces in Afghanistan and in Pakistan — which the corporate media



Afghans in Kabul protest U.S. military attacks.

describe as the Afghan and the Pakistan Taliban, respectively — have claimed credit for the attack. The Afghans see the bombing as a strong blow against U.S. forces. These resistance statements also identify the person who did the bombing as a "double agent."

The CIA has not revealed the names of those who died. Leaks have provided information that they include, besides CIA officials, a former Navy Seal who was a "contractor" and a former Army reserve major.

Role of 'contractors'

The CIA has not named the corporation providing the mercenaries. On Dec. 15, however, the Afghan resistance hit a USAID base in Gardez, the capital of Paktia Province in the southeast, killing security staff and a guard working for Development Alternatives Inc. DAI is the major supplier of mercenary forces to the occupation.

According to a report by North American lawyer and investigative writer Eva Golinger, now in Venezuela, DAI is active

throughout Latin America. One of their employees is the captured U.S. agent in Cuba who was handing out illegal materials to anti-revolutionary groups. DAI has a \$40 million contract to administer the "Cuba Democracy and Contingency Planning Program."

DAI is running a similar program for USAID in Venezuela. USAID has also been expelled from two cities in Bolivia, accused of intervening. According to Golinger, "A high-level USAID official confirmed two weeks ago that the CIA uses USAID's name to issue contracts and funding to third parties in order to provide cover for clandestine operations." (chavezcode.com)

Washington's dependence on mercenaries to fight its colonial wars is another sign of weakness. Not only the Pentagon — which has a problem recruiting a mass army needed for an occupation — but the CIA and USAID must also hire soldiers of fortune. Resistance fighters, on the other hand, are ready to blow themselves up in order to free their country from foreign occupation and domination. □

Finalmente, un paso hacia la justicia

Acusaciones en muerte a golpes de inmigrante

Por Betsey Piette

El 15 de diciembre fiscales federales acusaron a un jefe y a dos oficiales de la policía de orquestar el encubrimiento de la muerte a golpes por motivos raciales de Luis Ramírez, un inmigrante mexicano de 25 años de edad, por adolescentes blancos en Shenandoah, Pensilvania.

La acusación señalaba al jefe de policía Matthew Nestor, al teniente William Moyer y al patrullero Jason Hayes, de conspirar para obstruir la justicia, alterar pruebas, manipular testigos y mentir al FBI en el caso de crimen por odio racial en contra de dos populares jugadores de fútbol de una escuela secundaria.

La imputación federal también acusó a Derrick Donchak y Brandon Piekarsky, ex atletas de la escuela superior de Shenandoah, de un crimen federal de odio en la muerte a golpes de Ramírez en julio de 2008. Donchak también fue acusado de conspirar con la policía en el encubrimiento y de dar declaraciones falsas a la policía.

Una corte estatal había acusado a Donchak y Piekarsky de golpear a Ramírez hasta causarle la muerte. Los fiscales estatales presentaron cargos de intimidación étnica contra los dos, quienes gritaban

epítetos raciales a Ramírez, mientras Piekarsky agarraba un pedazo de metal para que los golpes tuvieran más fuerza.

En mayo, pese a las evidencias que demostraban que el ataque fue impulsado por odio racial, un jurado compuesto totalmente de personas blancas absolvió a Piekarsky de los cargos de asesinato en tercer grado de Ramírez, a Donchak de asalto con agravantes y a ambos de intimidación étnica. Los dos fueron declarados culpables y condenados de seis a 23 meses de cárcel sólo por asalto simple y por embriaguez al ser menores de edad. Piekarsky estaba programado para quedar en libertad el 24 de diciembre.

Un tercer adolescente, Colin Walsh, que enfrentaba cargos en el tribunal estatal por la muerte de Ramírez, se declaró culpable de violar los derechos civiles de Ramírez en la corte federal. Él testificó en contra de Donchak y Piekarsky en el juicio durante la primavera pasada.

La acusación federal declara que el enfrentamiento comenzó cuando media docena de jugadores de fútbol de la escuela se dirigían a sus casas luego de asistir a una fiesta y vieron a Ramírez con su novia blanca Crystal Dillman, en un parque. Se inició una discusión que condujo a una pelea donde Ramírez recibió

puñetazos en la cara, y luego fue pateado en la cabeza mientras estaba inconsciente.

Los adolescentes huyeron del lugar dejando a Ramírez mortalmente herido en la calle. A continuación se encontraron con los agentes de policía Hayes y Moyer, quienes estaban respondiendo a una llamada al 911 sobre el asalto. Para suerte de los adolescentes, Hayes estaba saliendo con la madre de Piekarsky, mientras que Nestor era amigo de ella y el hijo de Moyer jugaba con Piekarsky en el equipo de fútbol.

Los oficiales dejaron en libertad a los populares jugadores blancos de fútbol pero más tarde les aconsejaron sobre cómo dar su versión de los acontecimientos a las autoridades. El auto de acusación dice que la madre de Piekarsky les dijo a los otros jóvenes que se habían reunido en la casa de Donchak, que Hayes había dicho que necesitaban “hacer que sus relatos correspondieran”.

Patrón de abuso policiaco

Nestor, el Capitán Jamie Gennarini y el municipio de Shenandoah fueron acusados en una demanda civil entablada en 2006 donde se alegaba que la policía municipal mató a golpes a David Vega, un joven puertorriqueño en noviembre

del 2004, y luego colgó su cuerpo de las barras de su celda en la cárcel para que pareciera como un suicidio.

La autopsia hecha por el forense del condado decidió que Vega se había suicidado porque Nestor dijo que las magulladuras encontradas en su cuerpo resultaron de la resistencia puesta por Vega cuando fue detenido. Sin embargo, una segunda autopsia dispuesta por la familia Vega confirmó que Vega “sufrió heridas masivas, y extensivas consistentes con haber sido golpeado intensamente. . . El acusado no murió por estrangulación”, dice la demanda civil. (Philly.com, 16 de diciembre)

David Murphy (padre), quien es africano americano, entabló otra demanda civil contra Nestor. Murphy había sido arrestado en marzo bajo acusaciones relativas a narcóticos. Su demanda dice que la policía rehusó permitirle tomar unos anticoagulantes recetados, y que Nestor le pegó en la espalda donde él había tenido una cirugía de fusión de la columna vertebral.

Más tarde Murphy comenzó a experimentar dolores severos del pecho y los brazos y sufrió un ataque cardíaco. Él declaró que Nestor le amenazó con matarlo

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La lucha continúa

Campaña mundial reduce las condenas de los héroes cubanos

Por Cheryl LaBash y Alicia Jrapko

En la corte de Miami donde fueron condenados injustamente con penas de prisión extremas para tres de los Cinco Cubanos, dos de ellas condena perpetua más años adicionales, éstas se han reducido a las condenas mínimas permitidas por las reglas de sentencia. Para proteger a su patria, los Cinco Cubanos observaban a las organizaciones paramilitares con sede en Florida que planificaban ataques contra Cuba.

Los Cinco fueron condenados en un juicio celebrado en Miami el cual incluso los jueces de EEUU calificaron como “una tormenta perfecta de prejuicio”, desatando una amplia campaña internacional para liberarlos. El gobierno de EEUU sigue impidiendo las visitas de familiares al negar las visas a Olga Salanueva y Adriana Pérez, esposas de René González y Gerardo Hernández, imponiendo tanto un castigo adicional de forma extrajudicial como sufrimiento en sus familias. Una doble cadena perpetua a Gerardo Hernández no se modificó.

En un comunicado sobre su nueva sentencia, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González y Ramón Labañino, dijeron: “Como hecho significativo el gobierno de Estados Unidos, por primera vez después de 11 años, se vio obligado a reconocer que no causamos daño alguno a su seguridad nacional”.



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.

“También por primera vez la fiscalía reconoció públicamente la existencia de un fuerte movimiento internacional en apoyo a nuestra inmediata liberación que afecta la imagen del sistema judicial de los Estados Unidos ante la comunidad internacional. Se confirma una vez más el carácter absolutamente político de este proceso”.

“Nos castigan a los cinco por acusaciones que jamás han sido probadas. Aunque tres sentencias fueron reducidas parcialmente, la injusticia se mantiene con todos”.

Unos días antes de la audiencia para la nueva sentencia de Fernando González y Ramón Labañino, un evento internacional de apoyo a los Cinco Cubanos se llevó a cabo en la ciudad mexicana de Tijuana, el paso de entrada más grande de la frontera en los EEUU.

El evento del 4 de diciembre abrió la Sexta Conferencia Sindical de Cuba/Venezuela/México/Estados Unidos/organizada por el Intercambio Sindical EEUU/Cuba (U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange), que

reunió a representantes de América Latina, Filipinas, Canadá y EEUU.

El acto de solidaridad con los Cinco Cubanos se inició con mensajes de solidaridad de las familias de los Cinco Héroes y una actualización del caso por Silvia García, en representación de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular de Cuba. Carmen Godínez de la Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba habló sobre el apoyo a los Cinco Cubanos por parte de los movimientos sindicales en todo el mundo. Claudia Morcom, jueza jubilada de Michigan, mostró cómo la poderosa historia de los Cinco Cubanos provocó un proyecto de arte comunitario por un artista de Detroit internacionalmente conocido.

Alicia Jrapko del Comité Internacional por la Libertad de los Cinco presentó un breve vídeo con Alice Walker que conmovió a la audiencia. Jrapko habló sobre la creciente campaña de solidaridad internacional para liberar a los Cinco Héroes Cubanos, así como de la lucha para obtener los derechos de visitación para sus esposas.

El evento recibió una cobertura consid-

erable de los medios de comunicación que ayudaron a crear conciencia sobre el caso de los Cinco Cubanos, incluyendo entrevistas en cuatro estaciones de radio y tres canales de televisión. El 3 de diciembre una rueda de prensa celebrada en Mexicali, México, llevó la información a una amplia audiencia en ciudades de

toda Baja California, así como en el otro lado de la frontera. Pacífica KPFK de Los Ángeles ofreció un programa con información actualizada sobre el caso y anunció los eventos en Tijuana.

Dos miembros/as mexicanos/as de la Comisión Internacional para el Derecho a Visitas Familiares, Cuauhtémoc Ames-cua Dromundo, profesor de Ciencias Políticas de la Universidad Autónoma de México e Hilda Venegas Negrete, enviaron mensajes de solidaridad al evento. Venegas, miembro del Consejo Nacional de la Unión de Juristas de México y de la Liga para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, concluyó su mensaje con una frase de un libro sagrado de los mayas, “Arrancaron nuestros frutos, cortaron nuestras ramas, quemaron los troncos de los árboles, pero no pudieron matar nuestras raíces”.

El evento de Tijuana para los Cinco Cubanos fue organizado por el Intercambio Sindical EEUU/Cuba, y el Comité Internacional para la Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos. Visita www.thecuban5.org. □